

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also made available the President's earlier veto message, dated April 10, 1996.

Proclamation 7037—White Cane Safety Day, 1997

October 10, 1997

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

As we stand at the dawn of the 21st century, new technologies are rapidly changing and improving the lives of Americans. For one group of Americans in particular—those who are blind or visually impaired—these technologies have opened doors to unparalleled opportunities. Blind Americans now can more readily access information of all kinds, and these advances have brought important improvements to the education, careers, and daily lives of blind and visually impaired people.

In this time of extraordinary progress, however, the simple yet profoundly useful white cane remains an indispensable tool and symbol of independence that has afforded countless blind and visually impaired citizens the opportunity to pursue the American Dream. And so, as we all share in a new era of expanded technological innovations that improve the lives of all of our Nation's citizens, we also celebrate the white cane for its ability to empower and recognize it as the embodiment of freedom.

As a Nation, let us also reassert our commitment to ensuring equal opportunity, equal access, and full participation of citizens with disabilities in our community life. This year, we celebrated the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, reaffirming our belief that all students can learn and must have the opportunities and resources necessary to do so. And we must continue to enforce vigorously the Americans with Disabilities Act, so that our blind and visually impaired fellow citizens enjoy equal opportunity, access to public and private

services and accommodations, and a workplace free of discrimination.

To honor the numerous achievements of blind and visually impaired citizens and to recognize the significance of the white cane in advancing independence, the Congress, by joint resolution approved October 6, 1964, has designated October 15 of each year as "White Cane Safety Day."

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 15, 1997, as White Cane Safety Day. I call upon the people of the United States, government officials, educators, and business leaders to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., October 14, 1997]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on October 15.

Proclamation 7038—National School Lunch Week, 1997

October 10, 1997

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Each year during the month of October, we set aside a week to focus on the importance of the National School Lunch Program and its contributions to the health and well-being of America's schoolchildren. Through this program, established more than 50 years ago by President Truman, young people learn firsthand about healthful dietary habits and how to make wise choices regarding the foods they eat. And for millions of children, many of whom come from families in need, their school lunch is the most nutritious meal they will eat during the day.

When President Kennedy proclaimed the first National School Lunch Week in 1963, some 68,000 schools were serving lunches to 16 million children each day. Today, the program is available in more than 94,000 schools across the country, and 26 million students participate daily. This dramatic growth proves that the program continues to meet a significant need in local communities across the Nation, and its success admirably reflects the hard work and commitment of school food-service professionals, as well as the support and technical assistance provided by State administrators.

The National School Lunch Program also reflects our profound concern for the well-being of our young people. By providing them with wholesome, nutritious meals day in and day out, we are helping to improve our children's overall health, increase their learning capacity, lengthen their attention span, and promote healthful dietary habits that will serve them well for a lifetime.

All of these accomplishments are made possible by the many dedicated food-service professionals, administrators, educators, parents, business and community leaders, and other concerned individuals at the local, State, and Federal levels who work in partnership to ensure the effectiveness of the National School Lunch Program. We must strive to build on their achievements so that this vital program will continue to meet the needs of America's children into the next century.

In recognition of the contributions of the National School Lunch Program to the nutritional well-being of children, the Congress by joint resolution of October 9, 1962 (Public Law No. 87-780), has designated the week beginning the second Sunday in October of each year as "National School Lunch Week" and has requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of that week.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 12 through October 18, 1997, as National School Lunch Week. I call upon all Americans to recognize those individuals whose efforts contribute to the success of this program and to observe this week with appropriate programs and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

William J. Clinton

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Proclamation 7039—Columbus Day, 1997

October 10, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The life and achievements of Christopher Columbus demonstrate how powerful and lasting an influence one individual can have on the course of human history. Although great explorers reached the shores of this continent both before and after Columbus, few have captured the American imagination as he has. Perhaps because we have always been an adventurous people, eager for challenge and change, we feel a special affinity for this extraordinary man who left the safety of known waters to pursue his vision across the ocean to the threshold of a new world.

Although his momentous voyages across the Atlantic took place more than 500 years ago, their impact can still be felt today. Columbus' discoveries in the West Indies brought about substantive and continuing contact between the peoples of the Old World and the New, contact that gave rise to misunderstandings and conflicts that we still seek to reconcile today. He also made possible the exploration and settlement of North America and opened the door to our continent for generations to follow—people of every race and culture and ethnic origin, who have given our Nation its rich and unique diversity.

Christopher Columbus, a son of Italy whose bold enterprise was made possible by the Spanish crown, holds a special place in